part to accelerate the pace of utilisation of water resources development taking into account the sensitivities of Nepal in the matter. But, in addition, I would like to say that there are several programmes which give a special weightage for backward States, like Bihar and Orissa. For example, we have this year covered 150 districts under the Food-for-Work-Programme. Bihar and Orissa are among the biggest beneficiaries. In addition, we have a special programme for Bihar and Bolangir and Kalahandi districts of Orissa. Also, for the naxalite affected areas, a programme is being drawn up. The biggest beneficiary of the Employment Guarantee Programme, which we have launched from this year, will be States like Bihar and Orissa.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Next Question No. 122. *(Interruptions)*

श्री रूद्रनारायण पाणि: सर, मुझे मौका दीजिए, मैं उड़ीसा से हूं... (व्यवधान) मैं उड़ीसा से मेंबर हूं, मुझे मौका दीजिए .... (व्यवधान)

श्री सभापति: कुछ भी रिकॉर्ड नहीं हो रहा है ... (व्यवधान)

श्री रूद्रनारायण पाणि: *

TRAI's direction to private companies

*122. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether TRAI has given any direction to private telecom companies to immediately discontinue "misleading" tariff plans and show all monthly fixed recurring charges under one subhead for transparency to subscribers; and

(b) if so, the details of the direction given by TRAI?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN): (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) Yes, Sir. TRAI (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India) on 16th September, 2005 has directed all telecom service providers that no tariff plan shall be offered, presented, marketed or advertised in a manner that is likely to mislead the subscribers and that all monthly fixed recurring

*Not recorded.

charges which are compulsory for a subscriber under any given plan shall be shown under one head.

SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Sir, cellular operators are sucking the blood of the subscribers in one from or the other. For example, now, they are advertising that they would provide services with 'zero rentals.' But, if you look at it closely, such plans have monthly fixed charges splitting into charging under other heads. Not only this, cellular operators are saying that they are giving 100% talk time. But, if you look at their pulse rate, it starts the moment dial tone starts ringing on the other side. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what plans does the Ministry have in order to stop such superfluous advertisements and whether the Ministry has thought of any mechanism to monitor the implementation of such directions of TRAI in every quarter.

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: Sir, TRAI is the authority on pricing of telecom services. The TRAI has taken this up and has issued a notification to all private operators on 16th September of this year not to give such advertisements giving false promises, that disguise that cost and contain hidden costs. It has been issued to all operators and all of the operators have abided by this notification.

SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Sir, to put my second supplementary, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether it is true that TRAI recommended to provide 3G spectrum services without any fee and some private players are offering Rs. 1,500 crores as entry fee. If you calculate this, the Government of India would get revenue of Rs. 9,000 crores as entry fee. My question is: what the Ministry is thinking of doing in this regard and whether it is also true that once you accept entry fee for 3G spectrum, would there be any increase in the cost of mobile service? If so, how the Ministry is going to reconcile both these things?

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: Sir, through you I would like to convey to the hon. Member that this question does not relate with the main question. I think, he can raise it separately.

SHRI R. SARATH KUMAR: I would like to know from the Minister through you, Sir, though it does not directly pertain to this question. What is the progress made in introducing the 3G technology in the country? Could you be giving any kind of benefits to the initial introducers of 3G technology of even 4G technology in the future?

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: Sir, I would repeat the same. This does not relate with this. I would definitely ask the Member to put a separate question.

SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, according to the licences issued to the private companies in the telecom sector, one of the major conditions was that they have to concentrate not only in the urban areas but also in the rural connectivity. However, according to the report, these private players are not at all giving any respect to these conditions. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister, would he take any steps to pull up the private players in the telecom sector to pay attention to the rural areas too?

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: Sir, although it is not related with this, I would like to say that most of the private operators have met their obligations to cover 10% of the district HQ in the first year they have done that.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Sir, I am surprised with the kid glove treatment given to the private operators in the form of this reply. Sir, there is a specific complaint of such a thing being done, and the Minister's reply is that the TRAI has directed them. He also certifies that after that, those fellows are very good fellows and everything is fine. I would like to know whether the Minister would assure this, otherwise the question of privilege will come. He said, from the date of 16th September, 2005, they all have become good fellows. After 16th September, 2005, if any such advertisement misleading the subscriber is brought before the House, whom would I hold responsible? This 'direction' means what? Vegetarian direction? What action is being contemplated in this direction against those who are misleading? This is not the way to treat a question from a Member of Parliament.

If anything comes after 16th September, Mr. Minister, would you hold yourself responsible?

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: Sir, through you, I will answer the question put by the hon. Member. As per the TRAI Act, 1997 and later amendment to that Act in 2000, the power of fixing tariff is mandated to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India. They can regulate tariff. If there is any complaint of this kind, it can be directed to the TRAI. The Government of India has no control over tariff. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: If the Govenment has not anything to do, then he need not reply to this quesiton at all ... (*Interruptions*)... If that

is the case, then this question should not be replied here.... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: I do not find any reason for the hon. Member to get agitated. ... (*Interruptions*)... Let me complete my answer.... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: The TRAI Act was enacted by this House and the other House. TRAI is an institution, which is responsible, accountable to the Parliament. Through whom or through which mechanism is it accountable to this House if we do not have any wherewithal available to us to ensure that TRAI directions are being followed or not? ... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: I shall repeat my answer. ... (*Interruptions*)... The hon. Member should be patient and he should allow me to complete my answer. After that ...(*Interruptions*)... Sir, TRAI is taking note of this. ...(*Interruptions*)... There are complaints received against certain operators ...(*Interruptions*)... TRAI issues notices to those operator ... (*Interruptions*)... those operators cease to release such advertisement. ... (*Interruptions*)... If the hon. Members find that such advertisements are being released, they can make a complaint to the Chairman of TRAI who will take necessary action to ensure ... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: I will complain to the House. ... (*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let him reply.

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: They should have patience.... (*Interruptions*)... They should allow me to complete my answer.... (*Interruptions*)... If any hon. Member forwards any complaint to me, I will send it to the TRAI for necessary action.... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the main question is that when private telecom operators are giving misleading advertisements then what action the TRAI is taking. That is the basic issue. I will give one example....(*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please do not give any example. ... (*Interruptions*)... Please put your question only.... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Sir, I will be very brief. ...Sir, when a

consumer gets a pre-paid card for Rs. 1000 about one-third of this amount is taken as service charges. They are charging one-third of that amount. ... (*Interruptions*)... TRAI is a regulatory authority. ... (*Interruptions*)... Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what kind of mechanism the Ministry is following to control or even regulate these charges levied by the private operators *vis-a-vis* by Government companies such as BSNL, VSNL and others. ... (*Interruptions*)... My second supplementary is ... (*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: First you get reply to your first supplementary ... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: It is for the benefit of the hon. Minister. ... (*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. ... (*Interruptions*)... Not for the benefit of the Minister ... (*Interruptions*)... You can speak for the benefit of the ... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: Sir, through you, I would like to answer this question. Sir, if any hon. Member or any consumer is finding that he has been charged more by some misleading advertisement, he can also go to a consumer forum or court. ... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI N. JOTHI: What for are you? ... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: I think the way the Government enacted the TRAI Act and put in place the TRAI, its main aim was to make sure that competition increases in the market. ... (*Interruptions*)...

DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: That is not fair on the part of the Minister. ... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI N. JOTHI: What is he doing then? ... (*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let him reply. ... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI DAYANIDHI MARAN: I think the Members should address the Chair. ... (*Interruptions*)... They should not fight with me. ... (*Interruptions*)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question.